

SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION 399
By Fowler

A RESOLUTION to create a special joint committee to study
education funding equity in Tennessee.

WHEREAS, in 1984 an ambitious education program known as the Comprehensive Education Reform Act was adopted in Tennessee, in an effort initiated by former Governor Lamar Alexander, with the support of then Speaker Ned McWherter and Lieutenant Governor John Wilder, to establish performance-based initiatives for teachers and administrators; and

WHEREAS, in 1991 the Basic Education Program (BEP) was proposed by former Governor McWherter, Speaker Jimmy Naifeh and Lieutenant Governor Wilder to ensure equitable funding among Tennessee's school systems and on the recommendation of Governor Don Sundquist the BEP was fully funded in the 1997-98 fiscal year by the One-Hundredth General Assembly; and

WHEREAS, the BEP formula fails to recognize the difficulty faced by large urban systems in providing services to high-risk (due to extreme poverty) students; and,

WHEREAS, other points worthy of study include: 21st Century Classroom Funding; component adjustments based on educational cost inflators rather than government price inflators; and, realistic Capitol Outlay Component costs; and

WHEREAS, currently no flexibility exists among the school systems which, because of their diversity in size, location and other factors, reflect a need for more adaptable standards; and,

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WHEREAS, as the 2001-2002 deadline for compliance with the pupil/teacher ratio standards approaches, it is important that the Better Education Program's standards and distribution formulas be closely examined; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE OF THE ONE-HUNDREDTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE, THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES CONCURRING, That there is hereby created a special joint committee to study education funding equity in Tennessee.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That the committee shall consist of four (4) members of the House of Representatives and four (4) members of the Senate, to be appointed by the respective speakers and three (3) persons to be appointed by the Governor.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That the committee shall also include the commissioner of education as a non-voting exofficio member.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That all appropriate state agencies shall provide assistance to the special joint committee upon request of the chair.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That the special joint committee shall be convened by the member with the most years of continuous service in the General Assembly; and at its first meeting shall elect a chair, vice-chair, and such other officers the committee deems necessary.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That the special joint committee shall timely report its findings and recommendations, including any proposed legislation or interim reports, to the One Hundred First General Assembly, at which time the committee shall cease to exist.